

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 08469 072203Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-15 ISO-00 XMB-04 (ISO) W

-----046693 090212Z /66

R 072037Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3764

USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS CARACAS 8469

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC, BEXP

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL STAFFING AND THE FY-79 COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 208679, (B) CARACAS 7379

1. EMBASSY SHARES WCAG CONCERN ABOUT EFFECT OF TERMINATION OF COMMERCIAL TASK FORCE ON FY 1979 CCP, MAJOR PROJECT REPORTING, USTS SUPPORT, AND NORMAL COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS. (EMBASSY NOW PRODUCES THE LARGEST NUMBER OF WTDRS AND ADS REPORTS OF ANY POST IN THE WORLD). FY-79 CCP WAS FORMULATED ON BASIS OF COMMERCIAL SECTION STAFFING OF SIX OFFICERS, NINE LOCALS. TERMINATION OF TASK FORCE AND ABSENCE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE LEAVES US WITH THREE OFFICERS (AN O-4 AND TWO O-6S WITH LESS THAN 2 YEARS SERVICE IN VENEZUELA AMONG THEM) AND SEVEN LOCALS.

2. IF NEW COMMERCIAL ATTACHE IS NAMED PROMPTLY AND IF DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZES ADDITIONAL OFFICER AND TWO LOCALS ON A PERMANENT BASIS AS RECOMMENDED BY EMBASSY (REF B), WE BELIEVE ANY ADJUSTMENTS REQUIRED IN FY-79 CCP COULD BE MADE AFTER 1ST QTR REVIEW.

3. HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE ONLY PRUDENT TO DEVOTE SOME THOUGHT AND ANALYSIS NOW TO ADJUSTMENTS IN FY-79 CCP WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED IF POST LOSES TWO OFFICERS AND TWO
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PAGE 02 CARACA 08469 072203Z

LOCALS FROM COMMERCIAL SECTION. IN SUCH A CASE, WE WOULD CONSIDER CANCELLING CAMPAIGNS 1 (CONSULTING SERVICES AND CAPITAL GOODS FOR HEAVY INDUSTRY), 4 (CONSTRUCTION, MINING, AND MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT), AND 5 (AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT; AS WELL AS THE POLLUTION CONTROL SHOW. SOME LIMIT SEEMS ADVISABLE ON TRADE MISSIONS (THREE PER YEAR MAXIMUM AND NO MORE THAN ONE IN ANY QUARTER). COMMERCE MAY HAVE TO

RESTRICT ITS "SELL IN VENEZUELA" CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORTING THOSE
EXHIBITIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED FOR FY-79, RATHER THAN
GENERATE INTEREST AND INITIATIVES BY U.S. FIRMS IN OTHER AREAS
WHICH THE POST CANNOT, BECAUSE OF LACK OF PERSONNEL, ADEQUATELY
SUPPORT.
CROWLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CARACA08469
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780367-0299
Format: TEL
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780995/aaaadadw.tel
Line Count: 68
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 400c6956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 208679, 78 CARACAS 7379
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1522858
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMERCIAL STAFFING AND THE FY-79 COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM
TAGS: BENC, BEXP
To: STATE COM
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/400c6956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014